



**Town of Amherst
Town Council
Public Forum on Town Budget
Thursday, March 7, 2019, 6:30 p.m.
Amherst Regional Middle School Auditorium
170 Chestnut Street, Amherst**

Minutes

Complete video is available online: <https://amherstmedia.org/content/amherst-town-council-proposed-budget-public-forum>

1. Call to order and declaration of a quorum

President Griesemer declared the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Councilors present: Councilors Bahl-Milne, Brewer, DeAngelis, DuMont, Griesemer, Hanneke, Pam, Ross, Ryan, Schoen, and Steinberg.

Councilors absent: Councilors Schreiber and Swartz.

Councilors participating remotely: None.

Others present: Town Manager Paul Bockelman, Clerk of the Council Margaret Nartowicz, and Interim Finance Director Sonia Aldrich.

President Griesemer announced audio and video recording by Amherst Media.

2. Announcements - None

3. Presentations and Discussion

- a. **Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Priorities, Revenue and Expenditure Forecasts, and Other Relevant Information – Town Council and Town Manager Paul Bockelman**

4. Committee Reports

- a. **Finance Committee**

5. Public Comment

a. **Public Forum on Town Budget [Charter Sec. 5.3]**

Jeff Lee, of 815 South East Street, commented on bus service, sustainability, economic justice, and urged the Town Council to support public transportation in the budget.

Claire Bertrand, of 610 Bay Road, expressed hopes that the opportunity for online public comment would be available, that funding for ranked choice voting implementation and short-term capital expenses would be included in the budget, and urged the Town to enhance the slide about debt and levy and share that information.

Amy Gates, of 54 Spaulding Street, offered an idea for proposed revenue for the town: a \$10 per bedroom tax to be paid by landlords; and expressed the feeling that homeowners are bearing the Town's tax burden.

Robert Pam, of 229 Amity Street, commented that department budgets are tight, and that last year the Town decided to fund smaller capital items from the operating budget. Mr. Pam also commented that setbacks are a concern, and that many residents feel that sidewalks need to be wider.

Barbara Pearson, of 11 Paige Street, asked for clarification about how much revenue new buildings are bringing to Town. Ms. Pearson also commented about a potential Federal bill that would eliminate insurance companies, and would like to see historical data and projections about health insurance costs.

Amy Gates asked about the school budget, and how much it can be adjusted by the Town at this point.

Barbara Pearson asked about funding for sidewalks.

Robert Pam commented that there are competing needs between capital and the operating budget; that the percentage of the tax levy dedicated to capital is commendable, but that restricts the operating budget. Mr. Pam also expressed concern about the funding of social services; libraries and schools are restricted from offering additional social services due to budget limitations.

Bill Kaizen, of Goldenrod Circle, commented that the creation of the Participatory Budgeting Commission feels like it has a lot of potential.

Jeff Lee asked if there will be another public forum when a budget is prepared.

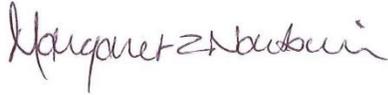
President Griesemer added that the First Congregational Church was successful in its appeal and will remain a temporary shelter.

6. Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the President 48 Hours in Advance – None

7. Adjourn

The requirements of the Charter having been met, President Griesemer adjourned the public forum at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Margaret Z. Nartowicz
Town Clerk & Clerk to the Council

Record of Agenda Packet Materials and Documents Presented

Budget Public Forum – FY20 – 03-07-2019DRAFTpb 6pm 6-6-19FINAL

FY20 FINANCIAL PROJECTION FOR OCT 18, 2018 FOUR BOARD MEETING